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HOW TO

BUILD A CHURCH.

BY

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How to Build a Church.

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ST. LOUIS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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BOSTON.

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PREFACE.

On the twenty-seventh of November, 1882, the people of Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, celebrated, by public exercises, the tenth anniversary of their pastor's work among them. Rev. Robert West, editor of the "Advance" at Chicago, took part in the services, and said to the pastor, on leaving: "Write a series of articles for the 'Advance' on 'How to Build a Church.' It has been given you to see two churches built up widely apart: one in the conservative and solid East, and the other in the progressive and swiftly-moving West. I believe it will do good to tell in the 'Advance' how it has been done."

Mr. West had been for five years the successful superintendent of Home Missions in Missouri and the Southwest. He had often been present and helpful in the services of Pilgrim Church, and had received sympathy and aid in planting the waste places on his field. He desired it to appear, as an important principle, that churches everywhere, which had aided heartily, according to their ability, in building in the "regions beyond," had in this way contributed much to their own temporal and spiritual welfare. The articles were undertaken, and written by snatches

in the busiest of winters, amidst ever-pressing duties and cares within the church and without. The pages contain only hints and suggestions, and are, of course, very limited and incomplete. They were not written for those in the ministry older and wiser than the writer, but in the hope that something might be said that would practically help many earnest builders in the Church of God that are asking, "Who is sufficient for those things?" and prayerfully seeking aid wherever it may be found.

This is an age ripe for the builder's work, that the Church of Christ may be a temple worthy of her glorious Lord. It is good to know our tools. It is needful to come back to that place where we can see what great things God can do with weak and imperfect men, if they only trust him and act on his word, as seekers after souls. Their power hides here. It is important to see that our failure, when we fail, lies in our own want of faith in God. Moses and Joshua, and Gideon and Paul, and the long line of conquerors in the divine kingdom, have been faith-men. They have taken God's word when He has said: "I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle; by horses, nor by horsemen, but by the Lord their God." Such confidence in His promises has made them mighty spiritual warriors, for their hold on the sword of the Lord has led them to wield with a powerful hand the sword of Gideon also.

The spirit required for the workman of Christ, East and West, is essentially the same. What will

succeed in one place will, as a rule, in another. The failure is not so often from want of ability or learning or right location as it is from the want of deep, believing piety. Many workers often comfort themselves too easily. They contend that the age of miracles is past; that apostolic methods are not for us, and revivals are not wise; so in the morning they sow the seed, and in the evening they withhold their hand. Little matter, they say, about their success; that is God's part, — the great thing is faithfulness. Fidelity is a great thing; but Noah's fidelity in the building of the ark would have availed little, if he had not possessed the skill also to lead in the households under his care. The faithfulness which God rewards is that which is not content till it brings results to pass. It is never satisfied to tread the old rut, year after year, making it deeper, while the churches are gradually decaying and dying under it. The truth is, faithfulness is success. It never stops with routine. It carries power and conveys blessing, and, although it may not always add to the number of the saved, there is a light and splendor in the fulness of its devotion to Christ that makes the place of its feet glorious.

It stands knocking until Christ comes in and unveils His beauty, and fills the parish with a sense of divine power, making all things new.

This preaching and going to sleep on our faithfulness till God gives the increase, is what is wasting us. The pastor who calls nothing fidelity which does

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not bring constant blessing from heaven in some form on his people, and is ever close up to his Lord's side, pleading for mercies and blessings, will be successful in conveying spiritual gifts unto men, as well as faithful in his work. The writer lives and works in a great and abiding faith in these promises of God to bring forth fruit.

"The Priest to the Temple," by George Herbert, of Bemerton parish, suggested a kind of form for this little work. His happy home, in sight of the wonderful spire of Salisbury Cathedral, miles away, shining through the vine-covered study windows of his pretty parsonage in green and beautiful England, was often in the author's mind as he wrote, as well as the thought of what Herbert left behind in the pomp and vanity of a courtier's life, that he might be simply a faithful priest of the Temple. And the gentle step and helping hand at his side, ministering good, were also as often brought to mind by the offices of love that gladdened the author's own home as he wrote.

The closing articles, contributed to the "Congregationalist" by the graceful and loving hand that presides at the Pilgrim parsonage, are added to this volume, as altogether pertinent to the church-building work.

Grateful for the favor with which the articles were received, I commend this little volume in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C. L. GOODELL.

St. Louis, Sept. 25, 1883.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE voice of experience — this is the one great value of this book. It is the open avowal of convictions and methods which have been found successful in practice. Dr. Goodell as a Christian minister has occasion to thank God profoundly for what he has enabled him to do. I suppose he never thought of making a book when he wrote these papers, but he certainly has a purpose and an aim in giving himself to the work of the ministry. How sharply he brings it out in the very first sentence: "The supreme object must be the salvation of men." And this has ever been, and ever must be, the one, living, supreme, imperative end of every true minister of Jesus Christ. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." To convert sinners, to edify the body of Christ; aside from this he has nothing to do; short of this he cannot stop. And he will suit his methods to his end; and especially, and above all, he will keep his own mind and heart in tenderest and

quickest sympathy with Christ and his gospel. One says of Baxter, "When he spoke of weighty soul concerns, you might find his very spirit drenched therein."

> —— "Much impressed
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
> May feel it, too."

And evidently the heart out of which these writings came is full; full of the joy of the Lord, and full of watchful, eager desire to save souls. We see our author about his work every day. He goes right on. He has no time to dally with the fascinations of æsthetics, or to pillow his head upon a lap where the strongest is sure to be shorn of his strength. He has no affection for doubts which obstruct and darken the Christian's way, and turn him aside to blaze a path — a dubious and treacherous path for himself— through swamps and deserts, where no sure ray of heaven's light is seen, and no voice from above the tree-tops is heard. From beginning to end these chapters show a mind clear of that folly which assumes that a man may entertain one thing and teach another. He preaches what he believes, and believes what he preaches. "For as he thinketh in his heart so is he." He neither criticises the church nor complains of her creeds. He neither doubts the authorship of the Pentateuch, nor denies the logic of Paul. He is not wise above what is written. He is not more liberal

than his Master. He knows nothing of an unknown God; but he does know the crimson guilt and the fearful sentence of the sinner. He does know the gift of free grace, and the power of the Holy Spirit. He knows the time for repentance. "Now is the accepted time." He also knows the way of salvation. Christ is the way. "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." And in such knowledge and convictions — knowledge gained from the inspired Word and convictions wrought by experience of the Spirit's power — is found the secret of ministerial success.

Most grateful also and natural is the earnest spirit of this little book — an earnestness that throbs in every line, and inspires exertion everywhere, and to the last. Here is an urgency like that which runs through the teaching of the Master and his apostles. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Timely and suggestive also is this book. Statistics show that in some towns, cities, and even States the church of Christ is not holding her own. With multitudes the pleasures and pursuits of this world are all-absorbing. There is a lowering of the law and a cheapening of the gospel. Sinners ignore the claims of Jesus Christ, and idle away their Sabbaths and their probation in unbelief. The very atmosphere is

charged with the forces of skepticism. And just as a nation ignorant of the true God sets up wooden gods, so the people, when they have renounced the Christian religion, embrace superstitions that are hideous and errors that are deadly. And is the Church free from responsibility in all this? Are our robes, as Christian ministers, without stain? Whoever reads these pages attentively will find the impulses of his own heart prompting him to an earnestness and activity which are altogether the best antidote for the evils which afflict our day.

The gospel is God's gift to sinners. To understand and accept it makes a new man. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." And the new creature must have a new home. How to build this home is briefly and forcibly told in this little book. Most heartily do I commend it, especially to young ministers, and pray that it may prove a guide and an inspiration to all who build "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

E. B. WEBB.

SHAWMUT CHURCH, BOSTON, July 30, 1883.

HOW TO BUILD A CHURCH.

I.

THE PASTOR SAVING SOULS.

To build a church, the supreme object must be the salvation of men. It is the first business for which the church exists. God sent his son into the world that the world through him might be saved. Our Lord himself came to seek and to save that which was lost. The Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, endued the disciples with power to become witnesses for Christ everywhere. The first sermon was a bow drawn for sinners, and the prick of the arrow was felt in three thousand hearts. From that hour there were daily additions to the church. Here everything points directly to the salvation of men. While this end was kept in the forefront, the secret of success in building the church was an open secret.

To recover men lost by sin is the deepest motive which ever stirs the soul. It draws from God the greatest gifts he ever imparts. This passion for souls

is the engine that moves the whole train. Divine power was not more conspicuous in the disciples than the human energy they put into their work. "This one thing I do," says Paul. They all had an eye single to the exaltation of the cross. They passed by many good things to do this chief thing. First, and continually, they won souls. It was their mission from their Master.

This purpose of converting souls and gathering them into the fold, is to be kept uppermost to the last. This is what the church is here for. There is no true success if this fails. The church will not fill its other functions fitly, if this leading one is lost sight of. Culture goes for nothing if there are no new-born souls to cultivate. There is little building up without living stones to build with. But if there is success in converting men, there will be life and movement throughout the church. It is what the church lives on, — the joy of new-born souls.

There are four sources from which to draw: the family, the Sunday-school, church-goers unsaved, and the great outside world. To keep four streams flowing into the church from these, is back of everything. In order to do this, ministers must be men of God, masters of gospel methods, filled with its spirit, and untiring fishers of men.

To build a church is to take hold in God's name and build it. Every victory for Christ costs prayer

and toil and blood. It must be sweat through. The church will not grow in the chill air of this world, without somebody to love it, and yearn over it with watchful care, as the mother over the cradle. The pastor must give days and nights to it, counting all things as gain which he can possibly do for it, whatever the loss to him. Men do this in business and make no moan over their sacrifices. Should Christ's disciples do less? The strength put into business in this age, if consecrated to saving men, would rapidly build powerful churches all over this land. Business men move mountains to rear their rolling-mills and grain-elevators and railways. The thunder of their captains fills the land. Ministers, with God overhead, often fail to move mole-hills. Much of their lack of progress is the sheer want of an enterprise and endeavor in keeping with the greatness of the object and reward. It never harms the religion of a church to let a living stream of honest business energy flow through. The religious life of a community would never lag behind the business life, if the same efforts were put forth in its behalf. We need work. I speak for St. James, the neglected saint of the New Testament. Men believe and pray, but fail to do. Though manna lies thick on the ground, God's people do not gather it. There is a soul to be saved at every Christian's elbow, yet the heart to do it is wanting. Some say the art is lost. Many of

the soldiers of the cross have called a halt in this brightest day of the Lord, and are taken up in mending the chariot of salvation, re-fashioning it after the wisdom of this world, putting on new attachments of human device, not satisfied with the divine model.

We get what we strive for. A minister may be a hard worker, yet his church decline because he does not put his best work into it, or does not put it in wisely. When the pastor is occupied with less than the highest, the church feels the loss. The social life, the educational interests, art circles, literary gatherings, lectures, concerts, public courtesies, and wide outside demands, all bid for the preacher's time, and he may give his left hand to them if he can. But to build the church of God calls for the full powers of a consecrated life. It may be good to be an accomplished scholar in curious learning, to be looking up subjects of unique interest, to be an effective writer, to have the oversight of schools, to lecture, and to lend a hand all round. Benefit comes of it, after its own kind. But it builds the church only remotely, and it often weakens it. It is not the prize which comes from drawing men into the fold; ministers lose unspeakably here. They are engaged in a thousand profitable things besides this, and neglect this, which is the very first work they are set to do. The general interests outside flourish, and their own proper work grows weak. They get what they live for, but

the churches dwindle. The minister is built up, but the church is built down, and the end is loss to the minister also. Men are built by what they build. Nothing so develops character as holding with all one's soul to the one great mission. To live among the miracles of the new birth, and the growth of the divine life, is to stand by the open gates of glory, and be filled and transfigured by the outshining of the mighty One.

Ministers justly seek to be widely useful for Christ, but there is no influence which one can exert, single-handed, to be compared with the power which one can wield under God through a well-ordered church, instinct, and radiant with the life of its great Head. The priest's breath, when the silver trumpet was put to his lips, became a bugle blast in the ears of all Israel; so the church, built by the Spirit of God, is the pastor's trumpet, ringing the invitations and warnings of the Word in the ears of the world. What higher or holier ambition can any minister have than to compact a community of spiritual lives into one organic body, and lift it up as a pillar of testimony, bringing its whole weight to bear in vindication of righteousness and truth, or scathing evil with the lightning of its rebuke? What minister in the land, sincerely seeking to be useful, yet making the building of his church a secondary object, gains an influence equal to what it might have been had he

staked his soul in rearing a true church of the Redeemer?

It is common to say the power of the ministry is decaying. If a minister is regarded as one ordained to do everything under heaven while his church is simply an annex, it may be true. But when the minister as a man of God sent to declare the gospel of the new life sticks to his business, his power was never greater. On his own ground to-day he is invincible. This keeping the salvation of souls in the lead, in building the church, is the best way to edify those that are saved already. The warmth and earnestness of Christian living which brings in converts preserves them alive when won. The preaching which produces conversions quickens at the same time all the saints, and holds them in service. The constant incoming of new members has a healthy and happy effect on the church. The teachers teach better. The preacher preaches better. The prayer-meetings have more life. The home altars blaze more brightly. The brethren are fired with greater ardor and zeal. The benevolence is stimulated. Not a department of the church but feels the blessed influence. The best way to train a church and keep it alive to every good work is to so order it that fresh rivers of regenerate life shall steadily flow into it.

Never was a greater error than to believe that conversions must come at a certain time, and then

that the church must stop and train the converts. Both are done best alongside.

The best kind of edification and training the church knows is that which comes from that style of church living, and praying, and teaching, and giving, and watching, and soul-seeking, which secures an inflow of souls all the year round. Every member has a place and a work then, and is built up and enlarged, and led from strength to strength in the Lord. If ten souls have been saved, and you wish to train them, set them to saving ten more, and let all the church lead in the work by spirit and example.

II.

THE PASTOR IN THE PULPIT.

We are living in an age of good preaching. The pulpit is faithful and courageous in applying the truth to the sins of the day. It has a special care for children and youth. It urges a large benevolence. The preaching of the times stimulates lay activity, calling not only men but Christian women and youth into service. It pleads for the planting and endowing of Christian institutions and has enlarged conceptions of duty and service to the whole world, seeking to win all nations to Christ. Thus many preach, and the power of these truths is manifest.

But this preaching of Christ with so much beauty and sweetness, often leaves out of sight and untouched the awful fact of human sin and guilt, and thus fails of the full effect that would be secured, if the two great truths of man's danger in sin and Christ's redemption were kept side by side. It makes a one-sided gospel. Love is set forth, but not righteousness; salvation, but not punishment; heaven, but not hell. It is easy to break over all barriers of God's

Word at this point, and conclude that Christ, so wondrous in his love, will save all men sometime somewhere. So preachers often lay more stress on widening the gate and broadening the way of salvation, than in fitting men to walk in the path which God has appointed in his word.

Sin is not less in the human heart because less is said in the pulpit. Out in the great world sin is stern and desperate, and relentless unto death. Make salvation easier in book and sermon, still the way of the transgressor is hard. Till sin lets go its hold on the soul, preaching against sin cannot cease. We must preach the great salvation "warning every man," because sin and punishment are so great.

The sermon must be judged by the Bible fruit it bears in leading souls out of sin into the new life. It may be good when it ought to be better. The final test of pulpit discourse is the result that follows after the pattern of the gospel. One of the dangers of the ministry is that, preaching well, it shall yet stop short of reaching the most important result. "They went forth," says Mark xvi. 20, "and preached everywhere, the *Lord working with them* and confirming the word with signs *following*." This is the fruit the pulpit should bear. We need often to review our preaching, searching out its defects. Paul calls us to judge ourselves, that we may not be judged by God. "Not he who commendeth himself

is approved, but he whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. x. 18.

Some of the defects in modern preaching, according to Bible tests, are these:—

1. Unbelievers are not converted. There are few adequate "signs following" the Word. The gains in many places are not equal to the losses. The mill runs on, but little comes of it. Revivals are seldom, and there is much distaste for them. In those portions of the country where means and opportunities for saving souls are greatest, conversions are fewest. There is a want of direct, aggressive, gospel work. Pastors are compelled to lament, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, but the souls under our charge are not saved." It is a terrible impeachment of our preaching. The exceptions only make the failures the more humiliating. We who sit in the seats of Moses, and yet lead so few people forth, do not feel as we should the great force of this charge against us. We have stopped in the wilderness, while Providence goes on and leaves us. Where is the old passion for souls? How little revival power! How few call on the mighty God. We offer excuses, try new schemes of doctrine, and find fault with the Bible, but God lays the charge at our door. To save lost men was Christ's first work, and it is ours, and nothing can blind God's eyes to our failure here.

2. The modern pulpit does not reach the masses, the great multitude of the people. With the whole field given us, we lose ground each year. Churches do not increase as fast as the population does relatively, nor as fast as they ought and could. The world waxes powerful and pours past the church doors every Sabbath a vast, restless throng untouched. Our churches mainly give up, and do not try to reach them. The ministers are educated often away from the masses, and keep away. Few could stand up on a street corner and deliver a simple powerful gospel message. They are not masters of assemblies, having little taste or inclination to handle the crowd, and fasten the gospel in their hearts as a nail in a sure place. The disciples "so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." Acts xiv. 1. Many of our clergymen read a paper to a church circle of cultured people of their own set at the top of society (what right has any minister to have a set?), and leave the great, sturdy, powerful, rising multitudes at the bottom, untouched. They preach to magazines and reviews and controversial books, and only a few even of their hearers know or care anything about the sermon. The pulpit becomes a literary bureau, while the people, the vast, untamed, restless throng, infidel toward God and his Book, trampling on his day and law, impatient of all

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authority, setting up a beer saloon and divorce court on every corner, are swelling in numbers and rising in power, and threaten soon to come to the top of society and rule. With vigorous body, and all their faculties sharpened by contact with the world, their dislike to church-people intensified, they will come to leadership, — they have now in many places, — and the fine people who have taken the cream of the gospel for themselves, and forgotten the needs of the many, will be crushed and powerless in these vast upheavals. God brings us the masses. Failing to invite them in, the bulk of the people go in the great trains thundering on, and the church rides in a dainty parlor-car behind. Christianity ought to be conductor of the train. The answer to the blind groping of the people in England for Christian leadership is the Salvation Army; and the English Church, from the classic shades of Oxford and Cambridge, is listening to learn what can be done for the people. The solution of this question from Christ is, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them." The example from the apostles is, "They went everywhere preaching the Word." God's suggestion for us is Moody. How truly the preaching of our time on this subject has lost its way. God and his Book point one way, and we go another. Under our preaching unbelief thrives, and discontent increases. But God and his Word will both hold us to account in eternity.

3. Our lack of effort for foreigners is another defect. The tide of foreign life is rising around us every day, higher. We go on, unmindful of the amazing changes going on in society, and learn next to nothing from their presence among us — preaching and conducting church affairs as if these people did not exist. Seven million Germans among us; in several States more children of foreigners born than of natives, and in many States the ratio of births in a foreign family far greater than in the native family; immigration coming in at the rate of one million a year, like the invasions of earlier centuries when the character of whole continents was changed. Yet what minister has converted a German? Who has really cast his nets in on that side? Our church is great in learning, and translates tons of German skepticism. Who has preached a sermon to the Germans in their tongue? We discourse to one small class on one phase of thought and philosophy, and scarcely make any impression on these raging millions of our population who imagine a vain thing, and in whose hands are the destinies of the Republic and the church of God. We are seeking after "wisdom," spinning our theories and speculations, as Nero fiddled when Rome burned. The wisdom of God's Book is greater than all human learning, and the power of his Spirit above all human power. The foolishness of God is wiser than man. God has put the means for this

work in our hands. For this duty God has brought this nation to its present high standpoint in history. How vast its achievement might be across the whole continent, if it would address itself in its Christian might to its work as Paul wrought for the Gentiles!

4. The pulpit of the day does not call young men to the work of the ministry as it ought. We are losing here each year, and the decade past makes sad revelations of decline. We call, they do not come. We preach in their ears, and they go out to business. There is some note wanting in the voice of the ministry where this is true. There is a judgment seat in every young man's soul. Roll the facts of his duty on him, show him man's sin and need of the Gospel, and no work will be more attractive to him than work for Christ. What doctrine does the missionary preach, the evangelist, the pastor in revivals? This doctrine of deliverance from sin through Christ, pressed on the conscience. It brings times of refreshing, fills the church with missionary power, and begets ministers and teachers. These truths have dropped out of much of our preaching, and hence its want of effectiveness. The people slide down into all sorts of errors, and young men have no heart for the ministry. Call them to preach because it is an easy service: they can find easier ones in the world. Call them to suffering and sacrifice, to toil and heroic service for Christ's sake, and they will

come. Nothing was difficult to Paul when Christ called him.

In these things, and others, our preaching has turned aside somewhat into the pleasant groves of the academy, and does not lay hold of the great wicked world, and change its ways as it should. Its movements are often sidewise and hesitating. We suffer from the delays of unbelief, and the grand work of the age which God appoints us to waits and wants the power which fails to come, "the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven." These are grievous faults, and more so as we study them. The remedy is in a firmer adherence to the Word and Spirit of God, anointing the soul with holy fire. If we make the Bible teach what we think it ought, instead of what it plainly does, in order that it may seem consistent always with human thought, and broad and liberal toward sin from our standpoint, marking out new channels for God's grace, instead of standing by his own methods, we shall preach the gospel of the natural heart instead of the Gospel of the Son of God, and so loss of power is certain. The highest test of our love to God is our obedience to his Word; and obedience to God's Word in the pulpit is mighty power over the souls of men. "Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven."

III.

THE PASTOR IN THE PARISH.

THERE is a greater difference now between the work of the pulpit and that of the parish than in the early days of Christianity. We have lost much which needs to be regained. Jesus Christ went about among the homes of men doing good. Paul ceased not to declare the gospel of life from house to house, night and day, with tears. Christianity began in a parish and worked parish-wise, going from door to door and heart to heart among the people. Planted in the household, the household still remains its stronghold. It did not get into a church to preach formally from a pulpit for more than a century. Its greatest triumphs were won in this near approach to souls through the personal wrestling of love. Here is the foundation of the parish idea, and of pastoral work. Let the early example and practice be restored, and salvation brought down from its cold perches in the church to the hearts and homes of the people. The family altar, at which Abraham ministered, and to which for centuries prophet and

apostle bent the knee, will be used by the faithful minister as a great factor of his power. "Salute the church that is in their house."

The first work, then, in the parish, as in the pulpit, is the rescuing of souls from the power of sin. The pastor that determines with Paul not to know anything among his people but Jesus Christ and him crucified, will be swift to see and seize the special opportunities for reaching and saving men, which pastoral work presents. He will seek to imbue the life of the parish with the spirit of grace. The one day's teaching of the pulpit will be illustrated and enforced by six days' faithful living among the people.

"What! carry the solemn proprieties of the pulpit down into the secularities of the week, and work there to save men? It would repel them." No — rather carry the sweet and blessed spirit of Christ into the joy of Sabbath and sermon, and also into the hardness and toil of the week, and make them both glad and helpful.

The pastor who goes around the parish in stone like the two tables of the law, is a pagan, and hardly less so is he who goes around among the tables of the parish, a mere good fellow, talking horses and stocks, feeling he has done up his piety for the week on Sunday. A pastor mistakes if he thinks by being worldly in conversation and bearing he will be more attractive. The ideal gentleman, according to Sir

Philip Sidney, is a Christian gentleman. He wins because of "high thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy." The pastor that is filled with the spirit of his Master will be welcome everywhere. He is all the more loved and sought because he is a living, serving Christian. Instead of putting aside Christ to make himself more acceptable, it is the Christ-likeness he bears that makes his coming a joy. There is no place where the minister gains by leaving Christ behind. What is called "society" kills down personal effort. The fashions of this world act as an exhausted receiver on the minister; he loses heart for individual labor, and courage wavers when the rich and pleasure-loving are to be sought. Much that goes as culture is as mildew, and even when a pastor has worked his parish up into a fine social state, a society tempest will upset it all; for such work, however pleasant, has little root. The same time spent in deepening the spiritual life of the church will secure a stability that endures when all the waves are up and the winds are contrary, for it is founded on a rock. For his spiritual work the pastor has something to show. All else is "hay, wood, and stubble," and the time is short, and multitudes around him are unsaved.

The pastoral work has great possibilities. The minister goes to the people with blessing, as Christ came to the world. How shall we get souls? "Go

for them," says Moody. Give your prayers feet. How do the bees fill the hive? They go to the fields. Where there is a will there is a way. It was a good day's work when Andrew went out and brought in Peter. The sermon will shake down much fruit, but there is much that must be hand-picked. The pastor is watching for souls, and selects the occasions that promise most; availing himself of every argument of love and reason and individual interest. He can go where his sermon cannot, and speak when it could not, and say what it would not say. Providence is always opening fresh opportunities, and the pastor is also seeking them himself. A sick child, a son or daughter away at school, a wedding, a personal trial, all such things are open doors. The parish work is the short way to the heart.

There are six classes of which the pastor will be always mindful: the sick; those in trouble and affliction; children; the aged and infirm; the strangers in the gates; and souls seeking salvation. Others are reached as time permits. Opportunities like these are like angels encamping round about the pastor. Timely visits make gains for eternity. Once lost, the occasion cannot be recalled. We can never draw souls to Christ as when trial comes. Then, if ever, a man wants to see his pastor, and his heart is open to the best he can give. He can represent his Master to the soul's needs, and make the Saviour's love

and aid indispensable. It opens the way for prayer and the taking down of the old Bible. Such service kindles the soul. It makes work for Christ real, revealing man's estate and his needs as they are. It is preparation for other work. There is no school like a parish. A good book is a boon to a minister if it is wiser and better than he, but contact with believing souls is more instructive and power-giving than contact with books. Souls are God's star-points of light in the world, — "living epistles" are they, bearing the Lord's own image and signature. It is communion with the highest when you come into the inner life of the sons and daughters of God; you meet God in his dealings with them, and witness his wonder-working; and nothing more strongly convinces and impresses the mind with a sense of divine truth. Pope saw God in nature. It is more to see him in the parish. A pastor will find stronger evidences of Christianity in God's dealings with souls around him than in all the books of his library. God is there in the scenes of joy and sorrow, birth and death. Work for God in the harvest-fields of life is an educator that no minister can do without.

Love for souls is the spring of all best parish work. The bird must be in your heart before you can find it in the bush. You can go over seas and mountains for the soul you love. The pastor who seeks to save souls will find souls to save. There will always be

one more case — a straying sheep to be brought back. And how shall souls ever be found, except they are sought? Pastoral work strikes to the core. To sit down beside a man and open to him the gates of light, and let all you know of Christ's mercy and goodness pass before him, setting forth the love and grace that wait for his acceptance, as you have tasted them in your own soul, Christ's image shining in you, and the accents of his love blending with yours, is to gain that man for Christ. He will bow over and accept the Beloved whose Spirit pleads at the door of his soul. The greatest good the pastor can bestow on his people is to come to them in their homes and business in the fulness of the Gospel of Christ, and such service is essential for the good of both pastor and people.

Ministers often whet their blades all away in literary studies, and never cut down thorn or briar in any hard path. They keep the mind in the smudge of book-doubt till the temper of the blade is drawn. Real contact with the people corrects all this, and keeps the pastor's heart warm with love, and strong in faith, and active and wise in service. He gathers up the dewdrops of God's grace out of praying hearts as he goes, and his soul grows fuller until the cloud breaks in revival showers. Being in the work himself, the pastor can set all his people to work, and the Pastoral Aid Society which he puts in motion,

carries blessing to every nook and corner of the community.

It is possible to turn every place into a pulpit or to carry the parish everywhere. See St. Paul praying with the elders on the sand at Miletus, with heaven for a canopy, and the voice of the great sea in their ears. What a mighty reaper was he in the parish, shut up neither to time nor place!

The pastor needs to visit the homes of his people, and talk of the good things of the kingdom. Where does the heart flow out heavenward more readily than at the board of hospitality, in the circles of household confidence and affection, under a friendly roof, sheltered by divine care and surrounded by tokens of God's presence? There, with the children present, where the treasures of years of experience, both happy and bitter, gather, how easy to speak of all God's benefits, and to let the happy interview blossom into songs of gratitude and praise from the quickened hearts of the kneeling group.

Modern refinement is difficult of approach, and the homes of wealth reticent concerning Christian experiences. But the pastor is privileged. He is expected to minister to the soul, and bear into the family circle the flowers of paradise. The occasion of such visits will be fragrant in the home as the coming of the spring lilacs, and dewy with the breath of the eternal morning.

IV.

THE PASTOR AMONG THE YOUTH.

He who builds the church of Christ must save the children. If we save the children, we save the world. The world is most easily and effectively saved in childhood. The best Christian workers are largely taken and consecrated to lives of benevolence and sacrifice and service from circles of Christian youth. Dr. Bushnell tells us of the out-populating power of the Christian stock, exceeding all other in its quality and influence over men and nations. The advanced cohorts of Christ's army in every field of work and in all lands were once the children of the temple. Life and death are in the training of children. The generation which takes the most children along with it for Christ will do most to build his kingdom, and to thin the ranks of the opposition. Out of well-trained children we are to rear the strongest defences of Christianity, — a soldiery of godly souls, true to the great Captain.

The Holy Land is a barren, shadeless land for the want of fresh young trees. The church without the

young ingathered and trained is a deserted field. Though aged palms are found in the courts of the Lord's house, we need, as well, the straight and beautiful rods of youth there. Wise kings these days plant young forests in all waste places; so wise pastors will be busy setting plants in the gardens of the Lord. Shepherds increase their flocks by carefully nursing the lambs; so pastors enlarge their folds by caring for the young.

The question is being earnestly asked, "How can we bring the men to Christ?" Bring in the boys, then you will have the men. The boys will come if we seek them on their own ground, meeting thoughts and hearts with thoughts and hearts that are kindred and congenial. Seek the children early, seek them faithfully. The pastor's best work will be in giving direction to their life at the start. The pointing of the gun determines the entire course of the ball.

There is no escape from these truths. The charm and beauty of Eden still cling to the children, yet they possess a sinful nature, and must have a new heart from above. Selfishness and disobedience and anger stain the sparkling fountain of youth, except the Spirit of God renew and redeem their lives. No human training can take the place of this. It is the new life in Christ which makes the culture availing and successful. Though God has gladdened the earth with little children, if we would be spared

the pain of seeing them drop in the blossom, their feet must surely be directed to Christ and never misled. The beginnings of the divine life must be put in their hearts before the world gets in.

Many are the ways in which the pastor may reach and guide the children. 1. He will first secure them through the home. His own example and teaching will, under God, make each household a joyous, living church of Christ. There will be daily family worship at the altar, bright with psalm and song. Obedience will be cheerful and prompt; kindness and forbearance the atmosphere. The spirit of Christ will abide in father and mother, leading all hearts into loving unity. Good-will and helpfulness one to another will abound, and every duty will be taught and remembered in its time. Reverence for God and his Word and day and house, faith in Christ, regard for the truth, love of right-doing, sorrow for sin, true manliness, desire for usefulness, self-sacrifice for others, and every excellence desirable in the Christian will be planted in the child. The pastor, thus, by seeking to make a true Christian home, will secure the conditions of a successful start in the Christian life among the children. They will bear the marks of the home through life.

2. The pastor will reach the children through the Bible-school; that is not the children's church, but it is the church and pastor mingling with the children,

and laying out all their experience and wisdom and spiritual power on them for their instruction in righteousness. The pastor is always in the Bible-school. He thus brings the adults and youth together, retaining the older scholars in the school, and all bound together by mutual interest. That great and widening gulf between adults and children, so harmful to each, is in this way prevented. The Bible-school places an acting-pastor in the person of the teacher over each circle of youth. It affords a work to do which blesses both teacher and pupil. It keeps the heart warm in service, and prepares the whole church for usefulness. It prevents any gap occurring in the services of the church. The young worship with the parents, the adults study God's Word with the young, and all grow up together, homogeneous. The Sabbath-school becomes a constant feeder of the church; the church becomes a garden enclosed about the children. Is not this God's order?

3. The pastor will save the youth through the pulpit. They must be made to feel that they have a place in the service, and a part in the worship; that their presence is desirable, and their absence regretted. An entire sermon to the young is good now and then. So is a five-minutes' talk, if it be fit and good for adults also. A special hymn for the young, a psalm read responsively, repeated recognition of children in

sermons, the chanting of the Apostles' Creed, children joining, the keeping of texts through the year in a little book adapted for the purpose, and other methods which the pastor will easily devise — all this always bearing directly on their conversion and nurture and not on their diversion, will constantly secure most beneficial results. Given a pulpit to stand in, and a Bible, and a Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, and a group of bright immortals fresh from the hand of God, with the sunny gleam of heaven still on their faces every Lord's day in the year, and if he does not lead many of them to Christ as the days go on, God have mercy on his soul! He has not yet taken his stand on the heights from which he can see eternity.

The pastor will gather the young on certain stated occasions for doctrinal instruction, laying down the great landmarks of Christian truth, seeing that the youth of his charge are established firmly and intelligently on the Rock of Ages, and duly warned against the pitfalls and dangers of this present evil world. And if he have in his hand a catechism outlining for substance of doctrine the royal path along which millions of God's children have walked securely and rejoicingly home to glory, nobody will be hurt by this.

The pastor will wish to have young people's meetings and gatherings for Christian endeavor where workers may be trained for special lines of usefulness, the study of missions, the practice of benevolent

giving, and the art of gathering in the straying. He will give them printed matter to read. He will guide them to habits of usefulness. He will enlist every young person's service in some fit way, where a responsibility will develop the character by sound and healthful growth. His motto will be: "A work for every boy, and a boy for every work."

Among the objects which the pastor will keep uppermost, is the search among the young for those who shall become missionaries and ministers and teachers and devoted workers in the Church of God. To this end he will labor and pray diligently, never content till his church is in that state of spiritual life, that shall be constantly yielding young men for the college and the ministry, and daughters for the seminary, and minute-men for all the diversities of service called for by the church. A church bearing such fruit is happy and blessed above all the households of faith. Beginning with the young, every pastor may do this, and end the famine in the ranks of the ministry.

There is great advantage here through personal intercourse with the young as Providence opens the way. The Timothies who have known the Scriptures from a child, and been taught the faith at the mother's knee may, in a sacred hour of personal communion with the pastor, decide to preach the glorious gospel at home, or to bear the cross over strange seas to the dark places of the earth.

V.

THE PASTOR IN THE PRAYER-MEETING.

THE secret power with God is prayer. The prayer-meeting is the most important circle that gathers in the church, both in its influence on Christians and on the world. The Church of Christ was born in a ten-days' prayer-meeting, and it must still be found in the place of prayer. In building the Church of God, prayer has the first place. Before sermon or parish work is prayer. Above all other services is the prayer service. God calls his house a House of Prayer. He rears his church over the wells of salvation, and by prayer the water of life with joy is drawn. The believer that is always there receives and gives a blessing which will hardly be exceeded by any other work he ever does.

The prayer-meeting must have the pastor for its guide. There may be scores of godly and able members, but he stands at the centre, and none can understand the needs and fitnesses, and bring out the gifts and graces as he can. An engine on the deck of a steamship moves nothing; but planted at the heart

of the vessel, fired and throbbing, it gears on to everything; each part finds its place and use, and the whole ship is in motion. So the pastor is the heart of fire at the hour of prayer, setting everything in order, calling each talent into service, and giving direction and movement.

The staple of the prayer-meeting is its spirituality. It is not a sociable, though it is social. It is not a talking and singing meeting, though men talk and sing with the heart. It is not a solemn rehearsal of prayer-meeting prayers; nor is it a weekly lecture by the pastor, made up of what is left over. Such a meeting is the poppy among the flowers in the garden of plants. Nothing can be substituted for the pure gold of devotion. Sprightliness and skill in displaying trifles will not pass. You cannot have a soul-moving prayer-meeting without soul-moving piety. There is auroral light, and there are many stars, small and great, but it is the sun that creates the day. The one thing that makes the hour of prayer blessed is the light of the living God in the souls of his communing children. If our prayer-meetings are poor, it is because our piety is shallow. Nothing will make them powerful and profitable like more godliness. Deepen the consecration and you deepen the interest and helpfulness. When the church has had most form, it has had least prayer; when its power has been greatest, it has been oftenest bowed at the mercy-seat. The gift of

knees is Pentecost. Wealth, worldliness, and fashion fly to form and say prayers. Living faith lifts the heart and bends the knee. George Herbert, in his "Priest to the Temple," strange to say, makes no mention of the prayer-meeting. It was choked by the ritual, as it is now at times by unbelief, by conclusions of science, speculations of philosophy, and the higher criticism.

Preparation for the hour of prayer is essential. It will not go itself, however good the saints that are gathered. It requires as much time and thought to be charged for it as it does for a sermon; and the conduct of it, as much wisdom and skill. It deals with the greatest principles of our being, and with the most vital doctrines of revelation. He who guides it, — his mind must be taught of God, his heart must be near Christ's heart, and his ear long at the lips of his Lord. The leader will not go up lightly from the world to this gathering, but come down as from the high places, his face made like Moses' face, from secret communings.

The prayer-meeting is a place of power. Miracles are done in it. When the disciples were praying, the Holy Spirit descended. When the church was praying at John Mark's house, Peter was let out of prison by an angel. When the church prays now, there is answer in India and China and Africa. While Christians pray there is fresh anointing from on high;

they become strong in the Lord and the power of his might. The hour we stop doing for God and spend in communing with him is the most strengthening in the week. More prayers and less words. Less time with men, and more with God. We get the victory in the prayer-room where no eye sees but God's, and all hearts are one before Him.

The prayer circle is a place of instruction. Prayer is a great teacher. The word of truth is unfolded there; mysteries are explained; promises are fulfilled; deliverances are wrought; what God teaches in prayer is pure truth; what we learn on our knees, we never unlearn.

The place of prayer is a place of rest after toil, of comfort in perplexity and trouble. It is good to draw near to God. "Draw nigh unto me and I will draw nigh unto you." The gates to the mercy-seat are many, and, like those to the Golden City, stand open day and night, that every soul may enter in. It is a place of fellowship. Next to the joy of heaven is the gladness of hearts gathered together in prayer. It is a place for conversion of souls. Of how many it shall be written: "They were born there." It is a place for replenishing the daily losses of the heart, and enthroning God again at the seat of the soul. A Christian is always helped in his association with other Christians. Single coals do not hold fire, but gathered together there is glow. Double the number

in this fellowship and commission, and you more than double the interest and power of the meeting.

A definite object is desirable, toward which the current of the meeting presses, that it may gather force as it goes, and draw into itself the cold and waiting ones. Variety is important; sameness is tameness. The tree of life bears twelve manner of fruit, a great diversity; and it sheds its leaves every prayer-meeting hour for the healing of God's children. Many a leader runs the wheels of salvation into the old rut early in the meeting, and there he is stuck, with no help from saint or sinner.

Make the meeting the centre of Christian work and benevolence. Let the best life of the church gather there; cause it to be a place of resort and comfort for all the weary and heavy laden, bringing what they have learned in the daily conflict of life; what defeats and what progress; see that it is the register of all best thoughts, feelings, struggles, and triumphs for each week. Make it a praise-meeting now and then. Let each one give a reason for thanksgiving; recount hindrances to the better life; sing sometimes through the entire hour, alternating after each verse with prayer.

Have a conference on such subjects as Sabbath-keeping, family worship, training of children, amusements, and so on. Let any ask for prayers. Suggest a season of silent prayer; join in the Lord's Prayer.

Write out a covenant each one, and resolutions, and let them be presented. Have a Scripture reading, all taking part. Privately ask several beforehand to take part one after another without being called on. For a Bible lesson, at the opening, let each one repeat a verse, and so read the Scriptures from the tablet of memory. Print a list of subjects and circulate them. Have a question-box. Give out the subject from the pulpit Sunday. Be on the watch for fresh experience of God's love and goodness, of promises fulfilled, of aid rendered, and prayers answered, and new conversions, and let the facts be spoken to the praise of God.

At the beginning of a meeting give out a living topic, and name six brethren before you to speak on it, three minutes each, and after singing and prayer call on them. If the meeting refuses to go at any time, turn it into a conversation, all rising and greeting the next neighbor; they will soon find their tongues. Appoint several members quietly beforehand to discuss a subject, and set it going without any public warning. Let a verse of Scripture be handed to each one on entering, to be read or recited in due time, and given away to some one before Sunday. There should be a great deal of Bible in the meetings. Sit in silence a little time now and then with God and your own thoughts. Let all bow sometimes, and one after another utter a sentence of

prayer that most presses on the heart, without rising. Take much pains with the music. Short sentiments in prose and verse may be repeated by the young with profit. Talk about the prayer-meeting through the week. Never scold, or tease, or worry the members. If you have any criticism or rebuke to give, do it in private. Make it the happiest hour in the week, and the most helpful place for the soul. Let it all be mellowed and sanctified by the spirit of prayer. Ask all the church to come, and make the hour so profitable to the inner life that they cannot afford to stay away. You cannot drive the bees with a whip, but plant a clover field and you will get them, and they will fill the hive with honey.

VI.

THE PASTOR DEALING WITH SKEPTICISM.

THE pastor, in dealing with skeptics, will make it his steadfast aim to win them to Christ. The way to melt hardened steel is to give draught to the furnace fires; the way for the pastor to draw unbelievers to the truth is to have his own heart hot with love for souls. When the great Refiner of silver sits by the pastor's heart till the Refiner can see his own face there, the skeptic also will see in the pastor's heart the divine face, and be drawn by the power of redeeming love. The pastor then will first charge himself with fault for his own low tone of faith and life, and reproach himself that he has so held forth the Word of life, that there are any in the parish who doubt the truth of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. With God's word in his hand, "the powers of the world to come" on his side, and the Almighty God over him, the honest skeptics will be few. Pastors have to blame themselves for much of the unbelief of the day, since their own doubts keep them away from the cross, and carry others

farther than they themselves drift. When the life of God fills the souls of his people, doubt and unbelief find little place, and that will be less and less if the pastor put the power of piety against infidelity as the best cure.

1. The pastor will be patient with the doubters. Christ was with Thomas, and won him. Thomas had good stuff in him, such as eminent Christians are made of. When Christ went up to Jerusalem, knowing that he should meet his death, no words could be grander than Thomas's: "Let us go up too, that we may die with him." But when his Lord was really dead, his faith received a great shock. He drew off by himself for a time, unbelieving. But Jesus was patient with him. He did not taunt him, nor storm at him. And when Thomas finally came to him at the meeting, Christ's goodness won him. By patience, a true soul was rescued from the snare of doubt. This is our Lord's own example for our use.

> "There is nothing so kingly as kindness,
> There is nothing so royal as truth."

2. The pastor will be Christ-like in dealing with unbelievers. That is more than to be patient. He will meet their darkness with that "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and not with his own human weapons. "In Christ was life; and the life was the light of men." The pastor

being himself in the light, will "bear witness to the light, that all men through him might believe." Unheeding the flings and jeers of skeptics, and blind to their hostility, the pastor's fervent longing that they may know Christ and come to the true light, will melt the ice of their hearts, and the warmth of his love for them under their criticism will carry conviction to their minds. For the perversity of men the Lord bore the cross and conquered. The pastor's own heart-break for their rescue from sin will prevail. Love is the strongest power in the world, for God is love. Railing accusations set the teeth of unbelievers on edge. It is Greek meeting Greek. When the pastor stoops to this, he is a loser. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Any purpose to triumph over unbelievers in contests of argument, to ridicule them, or to humiliate and make a show of them openly, only provokes opposition. Nothing is gain to the pastor but the gain of their souls to Christ; and in this victory of grace both pastor and unbeliever are alike blessed. When God's goodness leadeth to repentance, no one is conquered. Unbelievers can stand anything better than the steady flow of that love that suffereth long and is kind, that vaunteth not itself, is not provoked, that beareth all things and never faileth. It is not said that the time never comes when a mean and dishonest infidelity may not be soundly lashed by a whip of cords and

shown up by a righteous indignation, but never with a carnal heart gratifying the flesh. It is always the new life of Christ in the soul, and not the old one of sin, that conquers the opposers. The "old man" in the Christian must keep out of the fight, however much he aches to get in. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

3. The pastor, in dealing with skepticism, will be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit that every soul is renewed. The Bible is a dead book to a soul dead in sin; and a sermon without the spirit is a dry bough, though plucked from a cedar of Lebanon, and having in learning and manner all the excellency of Carmel. It is not social nor mental power that is to transform this world, but the power of the Spirit of God. God taught the prophets, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." Christ taught the disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." When Peter stood up to deliver the first discourse under Christianity, he preached not his own wisdom, nor the wisdom of this world, its learning, philosophy or science, "lest the cross of Christ should be of none effect." He preached the gospel of the cross by the power of the spirit, and God opened the hearts of the hearers to receive it. Peter did not load himself with human arguments for a conflict with unbelievers. He was not a "disputer of this world." "Ye must

be born again." The heart must be renewed, and its disposition changed. God had taught him that, and promised the power. Peter depended upon the promise, and looked not in vain. The Spirit, as he spoke, was manifested, and men cried out for deliverance. This result came through their hearts as he preached, the Spirit convicting them of sin and moving them to seek immediate salvation. When Paul came to Corinth, it was "not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "He had not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God" for his hope of success. He did not expect their "faith to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." His words were according to "the wisdom which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and souls were thus born by the Spirit with which he was filled into the light and joy of the kingdom of God. Very truly may Paul say to those who are set to lead men out of doubt and unbelief, "Be filled with the Spirit!" The Spirit of Pentecost still lives. It is when the pastor is filled with the Spirit in preaching the Word, that blind eyes are opened, deaf ears unstopped, and unbelieving hearts are made to see and receive the redemption of Christ. The pastor will learn this secret of power with God, hardest of all truths to learn, and bring in many unbelievers. The sling of David brought in Goliath

against all human expectation. To be filled with the Spirit is the pastor's sling. He can say, "I have no words of human power and wisdom to go against so great a host, but I have the Spirit and promise of God, and herein is the biding of power."

4. The pastor, in dealing with infidelity, will be mighty in the Scriptures. The Bible belongs to the weak things of this world and the things that are not, in human esteem, bringing to naught the things that are, the institutions and powers that so impress and dazzle the world. The Bible is "wheat and not bread," and, when cast into the soil of faith, grows, and no power can stop it. The little kernel gives no promise of the greatness of the harvest. The pastor will be a sower going forth to sow on the fields of life. The tares will perish, but the grain is not for death. The Bible is an arsenal for the pastor's use; everything he needs is there shaped by divine wisdom. It is a theological seminary. It is the library for the whole church of God. To know it in head and heart, by prayer and the teaching of the Spirit, is above all other knowledge. It is the rod put in the pastor's hand, by which he is to lead darkened and doubting men through sea and wilderness to the final home. "The entrance of thy Word giveth light." How many times, when dealing with unbelief, has an arrow from this quiver been effective!

5. The pastor will aim at great results. Pour in the light of the Gospel on the darkness of

doubt. Establish the true in all wisdom as against the false. Cause men to see the right way over the wrong. Preach the truth as it is in Jesus, not as it is in sentiment or poetry, or the wisdom of this world. Set a system of truth before men, and show them what to believe. Every time you strike down an error, lift up a sound doctrine. Whenever men see the better, it will be easier to drop the worse. Doubt and unbelief are negative. Infidelity is not a principle, it is a mood. The other side of unbelief is faith. When doubt is gone, belief is come. The pulpit is for enlightenment as well as for conversion. Bring forth your strong arguments. Cause the people to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let there be instruction in righteousness. Our modern faith has breadth; give it depth and intensity. The army of Gideon increased in power when it was reduced in numbers. Fill not men's hearts with all conceivable objections which they never thought of before, and then try to answer them. Give the truth bathed with holy fire. Preach no longer on little themes, but great ones. Build up Jerusalem with vast blocks of stone hewn out of the mountains of God. Be no longer babes with milk; produce strong meat. Under such a treatment there may be waves of skepticism and moods of doubt and unbelief, but they will be transient, and there will be, as in the flowing of the tides, steady gain till the saving knowledge of God floods the earth.

VII.

THE PASTOR IN REVIVALS.

"THE God that answereth by fire, let him be God." In setting forth the gifts that commend the ministers of Christ, Paul mentions, among others, the possession of "the Holy Ghost, the power of God." (2 Cor. vi: 6, 7.) God's ambassadors must be Holy Ghost men, power-of-God men. Revival work must be a leading feature in the work of ministers and churches. To labor among the youth, bringing them early into the fold, is of the utmost importance. Home piety and the Christian culture of children is a foundation stone in Zion. But our Saviour did not stop there, and the church must not. Christ's mission ended at Pentecost, where that of his disciples began, — with the descent of the Holy Spirit, and revival power.

The church has therefore two special arms of service — child nurture and revival work. The one secures the young and tender before they stray, the other reclaims the hardened and wandering. By the former, covenant mercies are distilled into the heart of childhood, bringing salvation quietly as the morn-

ing dawns; by the latter, the stout-souled sinner is convinced of sin, and brought to the feet of Jesus.

God is God both of dew and of fire. The Christian training of children provides for one whole side of the community, — folding the lambs; but the pastor will find that he needs revival power from God to reach the unbelieving and godless ones moving down the broad way to death on the other side of the community. The experience of ages shows that the pious care of children, aided by baptismal water, and catechism, and confirmation, without times of refreshing from on high to give depth and power to their piety, results in a lifeless, formal church. It needs a spark of the new life from "the God that answers by fire." A reviving from the Holy Spirit gives new life to the church and new power to truth and doctrine.

The pastor, in building the church, will give both these truths a place in his plans of work. They do not come into conflict. They help each other. Neither one can be dispensed with without great loss. While we hold fast to the covenant-keeping God, to the gentle "Shepherd who shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom," let us, for the sake of the waste places and dark corners in every parish, keep near that Mighty One who speaks to stony hearts in tongues of flame. This is the privilege of every pastor. It is the highest gift of God to the ministry; the anointing from heaven for the

conversion of souls. The pastor may or may not be aided by evangelists or other pastors; the spiritual awakening in his church may be more or less extended or frequent, but it is his own prerogative as a minister of God, endued with the Holy Ghost and the power of God, to see many souls converted from sin, and the miracle of the new birth so wrought upon the hearts of worldly and wicked men that the entire church shall be moved midst tears of penitence and gratitude to new consecration and better service. Let no pastor say that these gifts of God are for others and not for himself, until he has waited all the night long, many a night, at the gates of the Temple, praying and longing for the light as one that watcheth for the morning, and until God finally makes answer that there is no more mercy in the skies for lost men; that the wells of salvation are dry, and the promises of redemption recalled.

If all the gods who are asleep or away on a journey when they are worshipped, and who only supply fancies and vaporings to the pulpit, were cast out for the one God of Pentecost, what increase of power there would be. To sit down on these gods as Rachel did would be a step forward in the art of winning souls, and the preaching that converts nobody would end. The final test of all doctrine and method is fruit-bearing. Our churches must yield more fruit, and have greater power with God, revival

power. The pastor must "speak as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." The grace that converts one soul will avail as well for a hundred. It is as near at hand, and as easily entreated.

If the pastor will carry a soul-saving faith and prayerfulness and courage, he may secure many conversions as surely as a few. He will constantly watch his hour when he may move out into deeper waters and cast his net in on the other side, drawing it in full.

Christ walks all the waves of life with hands outstretched to save. The church needs nothing so much as to be led out on these wide waters to rescue sinking souls.

The pastor, then, builds thoroughly and powerfully when he seeks for his church the converting presence of the Holy Ghost in His promised fulness. Such periods of divine quickening accomplish great results. They arouse the indifferent, and reach the careless. A great number of those who have had no early religious training, or have passed to manhood untouched by it will be saved in no other way.

By revival work I do not mean such spasmodic efforts as are followed by long periods of repose, or to such as leave the converts uncared for to return to their old ways. I mean a faithful ingathering after sowing — a sowing in order to a speedy and full reaping.

The indifference to the harvest sometimes seen — pastors thinking if they only sow and go to sleep sowing, God will bring in the sheaves — is a fallacy and a sin. While the good man sleeps, the enemy fills the field with tares. God uses harvesters of living, tireless men, and He needs many, for the fields that are white. "In due time we shall reap." In many churches the time is overdue because the pastor has not put in the sickle, but has been waiting for God to do it.

Revivals will always have opposers; nevertheless, revivals are a part of God's plan in saving the world. The church was begun in a revival, and in spiritual outpouring it shall end, nations being born in a day, the glory of God filling the earth. Earth's hope is in these visits of God to his people. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple." (Mal. 3, i.)

Revivals awaken respect and awe for Christianity. Skeptics who have ridiculed the Bible feel the might of God, and the testimony of bad men converted shuts the mouths of boasters, shaking down the castle of self-righteousness. Revivals make the Bible a new book. They deepen piety, incite to prayer, lift up the family altar, and quicken all the drooping graces of the church. Laymen are set to work, new streams of influence are opened, and men are raised up to special service. Difficulties are healed, alienations

overcome, brotherly love made to abound, and knowledge and experience of Christian truth extended. In revivals God and Eternity seem great, Christ's love near and precious, and Christian duty pressing.

Revivals bring the church back to the simplicities of doctrine and worship, and Christian living. They awaken regard for the Sabbath and the house of God, the prayer-meeting, and all the divine ordinances. They fill up the evening service, and make that hour the best in the Sabbath for reaching and saving the masses. By revivals ministers and churches are more united, pastors and people are drawn into more endearing fellowship and better established, benevolence is enlarged, lost joy restored, and both home and public standards of piety are elevated. Revivals make preaching more Scriptural and pointed. The Word of God, pure and simple, comes to the front. A personal Christ is set forth, and the evil of sin and the eternal loss of the soul without salvation.

The doctrines of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Christ, and the rewards and retributions at the judgment day, are made vivid and weighty, half-truths and heresies starve, and sectarianism gives place to brotherly love.

Revivals take churches out of the rounds of formalism and the fashions and pomps of this world, putting new life into everything. They lighten the burdens of the ministry. It is never so easy to preach and

pray as in the Spirit's presence. They pay church debts, lift up the fallen, and give the church a wider field and a fresh lease of life and usefulness. Many "almost persuaded," will never start till this time comes. Missionaries and ministers and teachers are born in revivals, and great Christian societies which bless the world follow them. The church is always becoming cold and entangled with the world without this freshening power of the Spirit.

A revival is another chapter added to the Book of Acts. Ministers and churches *must* have such seasons of divine renewal, consecrating hearts more fully, multiplying offerings, increasing service, moving thought and feeling profoundly toward God and the new life.

The breath of the Highest is on the community, and the hearts of believers yield a sweet odor like the fragrance of spices outpoured.

VIII.

THE PRIVILEGE OF TEACHING GOD'S WORD.

It is a joy to teach God's Word, to prepare for it, to anticipate it, carrying it in one's heart. Many are the teachers all over our land who know this blessedness. Our Bible-schools are full of them.

There is a blessing in the preparation. Among the happiest hours are those with the open Bible at the feet of the great Teacher. A Sunday-school class is a good spur to Bible study. In this busy age many a Christian is at a loss for time to read, much less to search the Scriptures. This duty is crowded out by the pressing cares and toils of active life. While the body receives its nourishment the soul goes starving. But when you pledge yourself to a Bible-class, other things must give way; the lesson must be prepared, and this calls for faithful study of the Bible. It leads to real searching of the Scriptures. The teacher seeks diligently for the meaning and mastery of the passage. It is thus fixed permanently in his mind, and he makes solid progress through the demands of the class on him. He

endeavors to have his heart in accord with the truth he studies, and with the object of the work before him. It takes him out of a dreamy sentimental Christianity, and settles him into the heart of divine truth. It compels him to dig out the meat of the Word and to be on his knees before God in earnest prayer, and to exert all his powers in behalf of his pupils. It keeps him on the watch for profitable thoughts and illustrations. He becomes a daily learner, searching for good things to bring to his class. Nothing could possibly occur better than this for the spiritual growth and enlargement of the teacher. It compels him to be in the spirit on the Lord's day. It restrains from wandering thoughts, dispels indifference, and leads him to abide by the cross. He cannot squander time and opportunity. He cannot let down in his faith, nor allow his life to drift, being set to a lower grade of Christian living. A few years of such teaching, bringing all the better powers into play, establishes one's character on a higher grade. The good obtained by such service grows wider in its influence than the class taught, and fits one for better work and a wider sphere through life. We get more than we give, and that which we undertake as a sacrifice comes to be a special source of blessing. While pupils are under obligations to the teacher, the teacher is under still higher obligations to the pupils.

There is blessing also in the teaching. When thus brought into living contact with the Word, and your ear is opened to hear the divine voice, you are filled with a longing to tell others of these things, and teaching is but giving utterance to the revelation of God's Word to your own soul; it is only drawing aside the veil that his riches may be seen. Teaching is not simply asking questions. The substance of the lesson must be opened up and brought into sight. There must be something imparted to interest and awaken the mind. Acquaintance with the lesson gives confidence and courage. The teacher cannot give what he has not got. But the soul, glowing under the power of the truth, is able to send it forth and awaken the same interest. Teacher and class discoursing together as they turn their Bibles, comparing one passage with another, one reading a verse aloud, another asking a question, another still suggesting a practical thought, the teacher meanwhile gathering up the main points of the lesson, and guiding the thoughts of the class into spiritual channels; the moments are precious, and the hour is gone too quickly. Few joys are greater than that of the teacher who, first taught of God, gives to others what he has received. Then again the teacher is brought into close personal sympathy with the class; he feels a responsibility for their individual welfare. He sits down by them. He learns their needs and

difficulties, and enters into their yearnings for the better life, and by loving counsel leads them on higher. The teacher is thus a spiritual leader and guide. Pleasant are the friendships formed between teacher and pupils, — friendships that will continue through eternity.

A blessing comes too, in results. The truth searches the conscience and makes it tender and receptive; Christ comes near with his comforts and helps; light breaks in and cheer to troubled souls; burdens fall; heavenly things seem real, and the dew of Christ's love is distilled, and the ice melts from cold hearts. Many testify of the good they find in Bible study. "This is one of the most restful hours I have in the week." "The Bible comes to be a new book." "There is nothing that pays back such rich rewards as the study of the Word." "What a wonderful Book this is!" "I never regret the time I spend in Bible study; it helps me all the week."

A special joy comes to the teacher who is permitted to see the members of his class coming to Christ. What an incentive this is to faithful teaching! We may not forget that we are dealing with immortal souls, susceptible to the power of the Holy Spirit. The truth we teach is God's truth, not ours. What faith we may have in it! Weakness ourselves, the Word is power.

There is a blessing in the memories. Who does not recall his first Sunday-school class? Vividly those bright faces come up before you now, though years have passed since they gathered round you. After months of patient toil you saw in one and another the seed taking root, and you had the joy of gathering the fruit into the fold. You recall hours when a thoughtful silence rested upon the class. A gentleness in manner, a subdued expression on their faces, and here and there a moistened eye told you the Holy Spirit was near sealing the truth. Your soul yearned for them. You trembled as you realized the issues of that hour. You breathed a silent prayer for wisdom and help to lead them to Christ. The joyous privilege was yours, and the memory of it will abide forever. Here is treasure laid up.

IX.

THE INFLUENCE OF MINISTERS' WIVES.

THERE is an unfortunate and mistaken notion somewhat prevalent respecting the duties of a pastor's wife. It has sometimes been remarked by ministers, and even from the pulpit: "When I was called, my wife was not called"; or, "My wife has no salary," implying that no work in the parish must be required of her. Again, words like these: "The parish ought not to demand so much of the minister's wife," said in a half-pitiful tone, as if she had a hard time, and the parish were to blame for it; as if she were a kind of martyr to the cause.

Now, looking at this matter simply from a secular standpoint, does not the true wife take to heart and share the burdens and fortunes of her husband, whatever his calling is, whether mechanic or farmer, or one of the learned professions? And is she not ready at all times to cheer and aid him, and show herself a worthy helpmeet? And if, through her love for him, she often denies herself and makes great sacri-

fices in order that his interests may be advanced, are others to be blamed for it?

But there is a higher view to take of the position of any Christian wife, whether her husband is a minister or merchant or day-laborer. She has obligations higher than those she owes to her husband. "One is your Master, even Christ." So it is to Him that she owes her best service, and this, happily, never conflicts with her duties to her husband.

The limit of our obligations to Christ is our opportunity. So if the minister's wife has a wider sphere than some other Christian women, it is simply an enlargement of her opportunity, and the duties that grow from it are not laid on her by the church of which her husband is the pastor, but a bestowment of great and blessed privilege from God, which ought to be a joy to her, and for which she must give account to Him. So it appears that the duties of a pastor's wife are no more, after all, than those of any Christian woman blessed with similar opportunities.

But a minister's wife is a Christian; she has her own soul to save, and has her own work to do. According to her ability she is bound to God's service; according to her greater opportunity she will be glad to do what is in her power; and instead of being burdened thereby, all she thus does in His name and by His grace will add

so much to the depth of her joy and to the blessedness of her life in Christ.

The more we dwell in sympathy and grateful love on the humiliation and sacrifice of our blessed Lord for sinners, the greater joy we shall count it to be allowed to do something in return for him. Duty becomes a pleasure then, and we hail with delight the opportunities that are open to us. We cease talking about "how much we have to do," or "the great demands on our time and strength."

When we rise to consider, in any adequate sense, what our Saviour has done for us, we are ashamed that our service to Him has been so poor and meagre; and with quickened heart we cry out: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Let not any of us, then, who are ministers' wives, plan how little we can do to help on the cause of Christ in our church, and in our husband's parish; how small we can narrow down our influence; how much time and strength we can spare from our Christian duties to devote to "society," to amusement, to recreation, to personal ease. With such a spirit we shall dishonor our Saviour, and we shall be sure to have a hard, uncomfortable time of it ourselves, and the stars in our crown will be few. There are souls all about us hungry for the Christian aid and comfort we can bring them from the precious Word of God. There are those we can bless and cheer on every hand. Let us not say,

as Jeremiah did: "I cannot — I am but a child." If God gives the opportunity, He surely gives the ability.

There are, it may be, younger ministers' wives who are looking to us for a worthy example. I shall never cease to be grateful for the bright, beautiful life of my pastor's wife in the East — a lady who early ripened for Heaven, and was called from great and marked usefulness. I thought if I could only be like her in devotion to Christ, — if I could be a blessing to others, as she had been to me, in leading them nearer to the feet of Jesus, — how happy I should be. And for years after she had gone up higher, her noble, sweet example was before me, a great inspiration in my own daily life.

"Let your light so shine . . ." This light must be *Christ in us*, if others are led to glorify our Father in Heaven. If we are God's children we shall have the light of Christ in our hearts; and if we drink deep at the fountains of His love every day, and feed on the riches of His Word, we shall have wherewith to enrich and benefit others. "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men." Instead of murmuring and being sour because sacrifices and burdens come upon us, — and much is to be done, — let us thank God he has counted us worthy to be sharers in the toils of the kingdom He is building, leading back wandering feet to Him, and esteem the

privilege of working with Him who has suffered for us a great gain.

It is enough that the servant should be as his Lord.

Who is the minister's wife above other wives, that she cannot spend and be spent in the great company of those who are freely yielding up themselves for Him who kept not back his own life for us?

X.

WOMAN'S WORK IN HOME EVANGELIZATION.

I LIVE close beside the great gates of the West through which multitudes of the children of the East pass in long procession to the ripe fields beyond. Every day trains laden with immigrant families from European countries roll over the great bridge of the Mississippi, and emigrant wagons with their white canvas covering the home treasures, from the Eastern States, journey leisurely past my windows: both tides alike, home and foreign, with their faces set towards new homes far out on the great plains.

These things constantly keep the thought and necessity of home missionary work in mind and heart, and it comes by force into my daily prayer. I little thought in early years to have spent so much of my life amidst such scenes; but it may have been so in God's Providence that I might appeal, with more directness and effectiveness, to my sisters that remain in the East in behalf of this great work. Seeing is believing. If you could look through my eyes I am

sure your heart would be stirred with an impulse that would not let you slumber in the face of these demands upon us.

These emigrants come in families. Each family is a hive of bright-faced, interesting children. Our American families, as well as foreign families that move West, abound in vigorous, healthy children — boys and girls to be guided and instructed in good ways. It is a sight to awaken the deep heart-yearnings of any Christian mother. For these children are on their way to homes as yet unmade, and to communities unfurnished with Christian institutions and influences, and which often abound with snares and pitfalls for tender feet. Hence the pressing need of ministers and churches in these places of spiritual destitution, that the family altars may be set up in the homes, the children gathered into Sunday-schools, and taught the way of life. Here is a strong appeal to mothers to work for home missions. Other countries, except the Catholic, are not sending missionaries to us. If we neglect our own country, there are none to care for it. You look at your own children in their comfortable homes with every advantage of Christian culture, and the contrast is appalling; and you say, "Important as my sphere of usefulness is at home, I cannot stop with my own children; my duty is as wide as the opening fields" — for the mother's power must reach wherever the children go.

The work is not now so much to strengthen the weak churches as to provide shepherds for these incoming flocks.

Multitudes of children in the older States are destined to make their homes and spend their lives on these new fields. From every neighborhood in the East some young men have gone out of your homes to the frontiers ; great numbers of your sons and daughters are sure to follow. What better work can possibly be done than to seek to evangelize these fields, and to brighten the atmosphere with Christian light and love for the future welfare of these children? Their own children will be born there ; their lives will be passed there. There they will be buried. We need to lay the foundation of many generations now, to begin to build such institutions as we are willing to have our children spend their lives in. If we commence they will complete the work, and carry it still farther on after we are gone.

How much depends on right beginnings! Much has been said, and truly so, concerning the rapid and luxuriant growths of these Western prairies. It is no less true that the seed of divine truth has been equally rapid in its growth, and the yield abundant in places where it has been sown. It is especially within the power of the Christian women to aid in this work of sending the gospel missionary to these fields. They may appeal to every element

in the community around them. Other forms of missionary work may reach separate classes only. This affects all classes. Each person in the church and out of it may be asked for aid, according to their means, to build up Christian institutions in the new West. It is in the interest of business, of capital, of good order, of labor, of education, of the family, and home and country. It is in the interest of the life eternal.

There is some diversity of opinion as to methods of organization among Christian women. Whoever is a member of the church of Christ belongs to the best organization in the world for Christian work. The family is the divine unit, and in God's order we are households for the Lord, and ordained to work church-wise together — men, women, and children, and the stranger within our gates. This, certainly, can be done. Christian ladies in every church can make, in behalf of home missions, an annual canvass of the entire parish, visiting every person, subscription paper in hand, in place of the meagre basket collections, and thereby double and triple the amount now raised. This is a very simple way; but when fifteen or twenty ladies systematize the work in a parish, and go for the last dollar for the great home missionary cause, they will return laden with bountiful offerings.

We must read God's purpose and our duty in this

swelling tide of foreign population to this great West land. From my childhood I have been taught to reverence and love the work of foreign missions; and all the ardor I have felt for the multitudes abroad lost in sin, now kindles in my soul for these whom God is sending to my own land, past my own door. I see in it God's plan to warm these cold hearts at our firesides, and to feed these hungry souls from our own loaf of life. As we draw the living water for ourselves, we must draw it also for these parents and their children.

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